AP20:093

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 5, 2020
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Millions of Vote-by-Mail Ballots on the Way to
All Registered California Voters;
Early Voting Begins at County Elections Offices

SACRAMENTO, CA – Voting begins in California today. Today is the date by which county elections offices are required to have mailed ballots to every active, registered voter for the November 3, 2020 General Election. In-person early voting is also now available at every county election office.

"For the first time, every active, registered voter in California will have a vote-by-mail ballot in hand weeks before the election," said Secretary of State Alex Padilla. "This expansion of vote-by-mail will maintain the resiliency of our democracy during the COVID-19 pandemic. There is no safer way for voters to vote than from the comfort and safety of home. And with multiple layers of security — ballot watermarks, unique barcodes on each vote-by-mail ballot return envelope, required signature verification, and ballot tracking — Californians can vote-by-mail with confidence."

"I urge all Californians to vote early this year, and voting-by-mail makes it easy. Every vote-by-mail ballot comes with a prepaid postage return envelope. Voters can return their ballots by mail or in-person to any drop box, elections office, or voting location. Every person that votes early will help keep lines shorter and reduce wait times at in-person voting locations on Election Day," Padilla added.

Voting-by-mail is already widely popular in California. For the past eight statewide elections in California, a majority of the votes cast were through vote-by-mail ballots. Click here to view historical California vote-by-mail statistics.

NOTE: The Secretary of State's office does not issue, receive, or count ballots. Elections officials in each of California's 58 counties print, process, and count ballots.

Vote-by-Mail Ballot Tracking
The Secretary of State's "Where's My Ballot?" tracking tool is available statewide. All California voters can now sign-up at **WheresMyBallot.sos.ca.gov** to receive automated notifications about their vote-by-mail ballots by email, text (SMS), or voice call. This is an expansion from the 25 counties who offered the tool for the March 3, 2020 Presidential Primary Election.

Voters who sign up for "Where's My Ballot?" will receive automatic updates when the county elections office:

- Mailed their ballot.
- Received their ballot.
- Counted their ballot.
- Has any issues with their ballot.

Tips for Vote-by-Mail Voters:
- If you're not sure of your registration status, visit the Secretary of State's My Voter Status tool at: **VoterStatus.sos.ca.gov**.
- Every vote-by-mail ballot comes with a first-class prepaid postage return envelope.
- You can drop off your ballot at any polling place, vote center, or your county elections office, through Election Day.
- Before returning your ballot, you must remember to sign and date the return envelope provided with your vote-by-mail ballot.
- Ballots that are returned by mail must be postmarked on or before Election Day, and received by county elections officials no later than 17 days after the election.

Vote-by-Mail Security:
- The vendors who print ballots for California elections must be certified by the Secretary of State.
- Vote-by-mail ballots have specific paper types and watermarks.
- Every vote-by-mail ballot return envelope has a unique bar code that elections officials scan. Ballots cannot be returned in a different envelope.
- Vote-by-mail ballots cannot be forwarded by the USPS.
- California county elections officials check each and every vote-by-mail ballot that is cast.
- Elections officials check to see if the voter has already cast a ballot elsewhere.
- A voter's signature on the vote-by-mail ballot return envelope is compared against the voter's registration record. If a signature is missing or does not match the registration record, elections officials will reach out to the voter. If the voter does not respond and provide a missing/corrected signature, the ballot will not count.

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